

# Poems and Prose



By Bruce  
of  
Farrants Hill

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(Donald Bruce Whittaker)

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Text by Donald Bruce Whittaker (1941-2000)

Edited by Lionel D C Hartley

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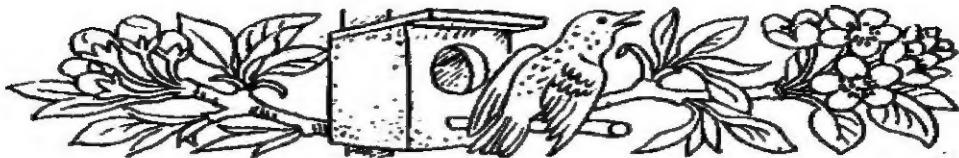
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## Preface

Over a two or three year period, Bruce Whittaker secreted prose, poems, and their revisions to the editor for future publication as a surprise to his family. He originally, and maybe *facétieux*, suggested the title, 'Your Fill from the Quill of Bruce of Farrants Hill'. It was with great sorrow that the editor learned of his death only weeks before publication. And so this small compilation, although selected by Bruce himself, has been published posthumously.

Donald Bruce Whittaker (1941-2000) was the son of an evangelist and spent his childhood hearing the Word of God publicly preached almost daily. He chose also to study for himself and mastered New Testament Greek to aid him in his personal search for the Biblical Jesus. His poems and prose show that his search was not in vain.

In the short time that I knew him I found him to be quiet, unassuming and strangely serious. And yet he shared a wonderful warmth and love which began with his family and radiated out to all he met. I count it a great privilege to have known him and look forward to meeting him again on Resurrection Morning.

The content of Bruce Whittaker's writings will leave no doubt in the reader's mind that he loved his Lord and that he would wish for the same of his readers.

Lionel Hartley, Editor  
November 2000

Dedication  
To Victoria

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# Advice To Corinthians

By Paul of Tarsus (1st Cor. 13:1-3)

As told to Bruce of Farrants Hill

If I could speak the tongues of men  
and angel dialect besides

What profit would that be to me  
if Love I brushed aside

Then my smart but empty words  
would be like noisy gongs

Or perhaps a tinkling cymbal sound  
unheeded by the throng

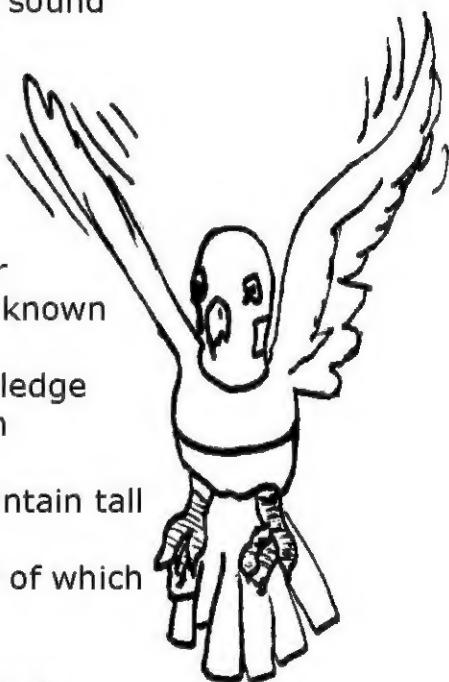
If I could see the future clear  
and mysteries were trifles known

If vast ocean depths of knowledge  
were fathoms easily shown

If my faith could seize a mountain tall  
and heave it into hell

And yet that Love, the worth of which  
the Father knows full well

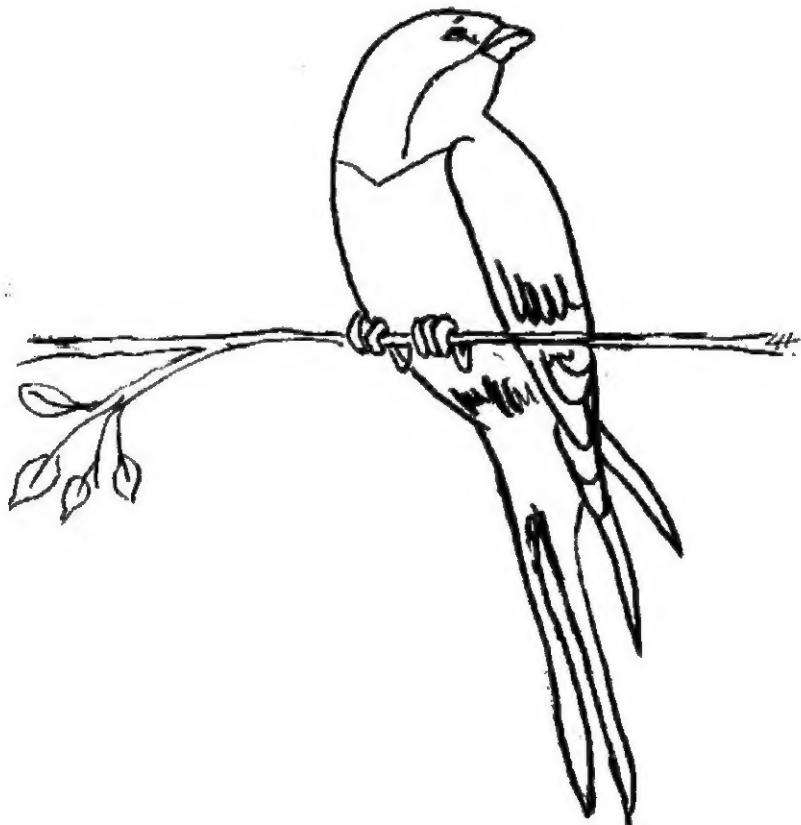
I did not value, then in His gaze  
a hapless slave I'd be, content  
With servile ignorance to ply a course  
that's self-destruction bent



If with philanthropic frame my goods  
to poor men's needs I give

And if I pledged myself a martyr burned,  
with Jesus soon to live

Ah, foolish one, what wasted sacrificial effort  
that would be  
If sweet Jesus' saving Love was not  
the motivating force in me



# Blest Hope

When the final enemy breaches home  
And breaks the quivering silver chord  
When the clods of the valley fall  
Like lead upon the sorrowing soul  
When comforting sympathetic words  
Like icicles cold are heard

Then maybe, the only hope words  
That we shall see, are the ones that say  
That the Lord Himself shall descend one day  
And the dead in Christ arising first  
From 'neath those clammy clods shall burst  
And together ne'er to part, we shall rise  
To meet our Saviour in the skies

# The Prayer That Saves

Prayer for sin is not an expiation  
It has no merit of itself in any situation  
For the most eloquent prayers are but idle words  
If the hearts true sentiments are not heard

And all the flowery words at our command  
Are useless if holy desires will not stand  
For God has no ear for ceremonials long  
His ardent heart craves a different song

But the prayer that comes from an earnest heart  
When the simple wants of the soul are part  
Of an unspoken cry and with a sense of sin  
Winds its chartered course in expectation  
Of faith to the Hearer who lovingly feels  
That this is the prayer that saved and healed

# Friends

We should ever feel a care and friendly interest deep  
For the saving of the wayward, impenitent and cheap

But we can with perfect safety, only choose  
For friends, those folk we really can't afford to lose

Because they first and foremost seek  
The precious company of God to keep

# Come Ye Apart

Oh broken heart we hear Him speaking  
As other voices growing vain  
We wait in quietness, weeping  
The silence of the soul makes plain  
That gracious, kindly, heavenly strain ,  
Even as His atmosphere of rest  
Invades the mind with fragrance blest

And 'mid the unsmiling hurrying throng  
Who strain at life's wild fascinating song  
Are souls who've been revived, they know  
A power Divine, men's hearts to show

"Be still and know that I am God."  
– Psalm 46:10

"Wait on the Lord:  
Be of good courage  
And He shall strengthen thine heart:  
Wait, I say on the Lord."  
– Psalm 27:4

# The Dawn Service (1)

'Twas in a prayerful, solitary and early morning hour  
That Jesus supplicated wisdom,  
grace and plenteous power

Could our headstrong precious children dear  
Learn this lesson in the morning of their years?

What freshness, joy and sweetness dawning clear  
Would wipe away the souls dark night of bitter tears



# The Dawn Service (2)

Conversion's perfect day , it came ... it went  
It's grace, a precious credit long's been spent  
Rolling years it took for me to learn  
That dayspring's flush is all I have to turn  
Another consecration, fresh-born in dews of dawn  
Into expectant gifts of love that say  
These few moments fleeting, they're Yours today

We cannot give You weeks and years  
For we have not received their tears  
And tomorrow's care is not yet mine  
But for today, my God, please use it Thine

# The Father of the Bride...

I tend to find weddings to be places where you are likely to hear lots of good advice. I don't know why we do that, since the parties for whom it was intended are probably not concentrating very well anyway, and given a day or so down the track those certain parties would probably be hard-pressed to remember anything resembling good advice. So you will be glad to know this evening, I'm not going to offer my usual seven hints for preserving an exciting and happy marriage. But I will say this that if indeed a happy marriage is something you really want [and we want it for you] then it's going to be something that both of you will have to work at. Because [and wait for the cliché] happy marriages don't just happen. How often have we heard that?

It is nevertheless very true.



The other evening, Wednesday evening I think, my wife said to me that the radio had proclaimed on the news that the minimum temperature in Inverell, Thursday morning, was going to be 0 degrees. I was sitting at the computer at the time trying to put a few words on this bit of paper. And, by-the-way, minimum temperatures where we live on the coast are considerably higher than that. However, that comment by my wife

started a train of thought. It put me in mind of some wonderful things you just don't forget about your childhood.

One of those pleasant memories was hurrying down to the kitchen on cold winter mornings and feeling the warm floor under my feet. We lived in New Zealand at the time and there are some cold spots there. The worst part was getting out from under the pile of blankets and putting my bare feet on the cold floor. I didn't waste any time getting to the kitchen because I knew the old stove would be fired up and the floors would be warm.

I sure enjoyed the warmth. It was wonderful. But it didn't come about without effort. My dad cut and split the wood. It was my job to carry and store the wood. As I recall it took a lot of effort to keep that fire going , but it was worth it considering the alternative – cold feet. We all enjoyed the warmth and so we did our part to keep the home fires burning.

What worries me is that many of the marriages I hear about today become loveless utilitarian relationships, sustained merely to protect children, property, shared careers and other business interests. In other words they're pretty cold.

A cold utilitarian relationship doesn't particularly appeal to me, nor you – I hope. And so I'm suggesting to you, today, the addition of a little fuel to the love fires of your marriage. And that fuel I suggest is effort. When you consider the cold alternative I think it's worth it.

Mother and I wish you all the very very best and a happy future together. Thanks everybody for coming. ... Have a happy time everybody.

– *The Father of the Bride*

# The Best Policy

It isn't chance  
that guides us through this life but once

For providence decrees  
that water from the bridge must flee

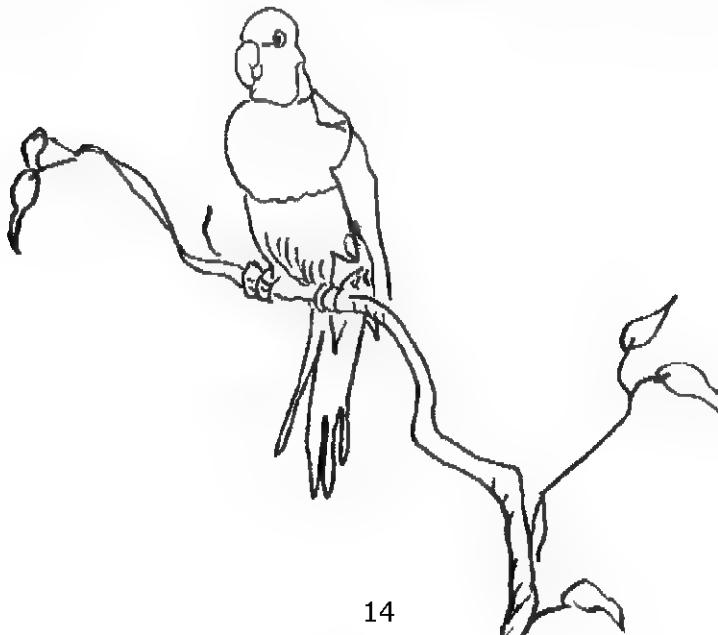
We come not back  
the second time to rectify our gaffes\*

Then why do we try  
the honest and contrived to harmonize?

Such can never see  
to act as one and in agreement be

May God and right  
ever be the subject of our thought and fight

(\*gaffe – a blunder; an indiscreet act or remark – OED)



# Comparatively Speaking

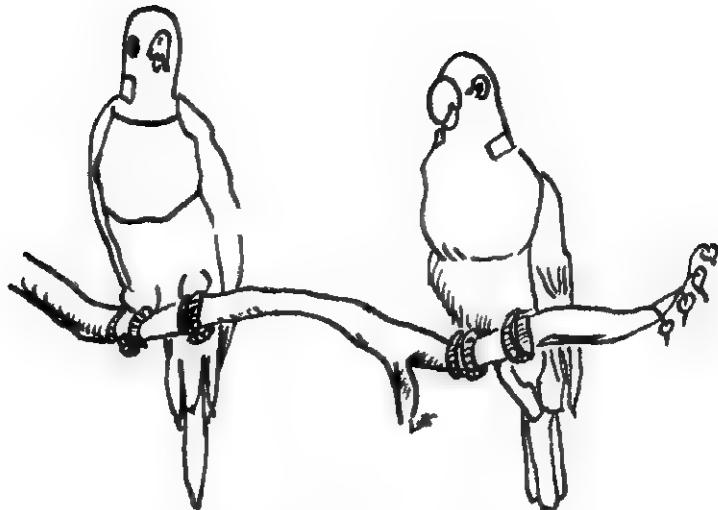
Six stories high it was, a mansion novel  
Sixty feet of it, above his brother's hovel  
But on that account, he was no nearer heaven  
Than his poor neighbour, hunger craven  
For on a day of grief he did come down  
And lay six feet beneath the ground  
And the poorer man when he was dead  
"Was laid no lower," the preacher said

We do not prize a lovely tree  
Because it grows on a mountain free  
Nor despise another sown and in a valley grown  
But we appreciate or otherwise and declare  
The quality of the fruit they bear  
Friend, never look back to see how far  
You've left some other Christian marred.  
Look! See how far short of Christ you be?  
Take courage brother and run for that  
In a word look "forward" and never back

## The Quartette

We hear not their angel voices sprite  
We see them not with natural sight  
But their hands are linked around the sphere  
With sleepless vigil the evil hosts at bay they steer  
Till the final forehead with the seal is placed  
And fades times echo on Love's sweet melody of grace

And so, dear friend of mine, it's crystal clear  
That **now** today, is the accepted time of year  
Why shilly - shally, loiter, ponder and delay?  
When Now's the time we ought to kneel and pray



## Help For Us

Inspired by Patriarchs and Prophets, p421

Help for us He has provided,  
in His strength we may be free  
Weak points are attacked by Satan,  
but overcome we need not be.  
However great life's pressures  
bring upon the soul to bear  
Temptations boldest blast,  
cannot with sin excuses share

Earth's freshest morn, Hell's blackest night,  
they have no compulsion  
Anyone to evil do, transgression's choice in source  
is our invention  
Though sport of circumstance is hard,  
and unexpectedly brings tension  
Provision ample He has provided,  
in His will we may be free  
Weakness may be loved by Satan,  
but overcome?.. We need not be!

# Doers or Dudes

He reaps a hunger crop of spirit need  
Who diligently sows with hunger seed  
Take sower Laziness, poor gentle fellow  
He's spawned the clamour child Want  
Sweet child of ease, but hardly mellow

Yon craving Need of this wanting hour  
For doers not dudes you justly plead  
Ornamentals fine may be, visions bright they power  
But on dreams they dine, and forgetting the deeds  
They finally kneel to those who oft for pain  
And loss, as soldiers true and game  
Marching forth  
And counting not the hardness of the course  
They by the inward eye of faith  
The heavenly vision followed.

We may have heaven in our mouths, how sweet  
But really, we're not there until it's in our feet  
For it's not tongues titillating loquacity  
But rather feet walking, saith *The Follow Me.*

## True Love (a fragment)

Love is not revealed in only words and claims  
It's more than pain in bones of burning flame  
God's love is shown and proved in actions strong  
It endures test and trial though time be long

So when with care you truly Love without offence  
With grit you stand your ground in faulty man's defence.

# Remember

## A Paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 12

Remember now my son  
    your Maker, in days of zestful youth and fun  
For shrinking years will while away  
    and soon your thoughts will say  
"This tired old journey's walk with time  
    with joyless eyes I see"  
For the unsought day will come  
    when hesitating eyesight dim will be  
When shaft of sun and misty moonlight sweet  
    is hard to tell between  
When twinkling starry luminescence fades  
    and each day bright seems  
Overcast and dark and filled  
    with clouds of fear and doubt and rain  
And arms that once so strong and quick  
    will shake, and legs will pain  
And precious grinders stained and few  
    will make it difficult to chew  
And life's view will be a vista seen  
    through some hazy half drawn screen  
While microphone is deaf to noisy streets  
    and ears will scarcely tune  
The wheat-mill strong  
    as it grinds the music to the young girl's song  
Nor will rousing come with dawn  
    as feathered folks their songs adorn  
Fear with you will climb the heights  
    and danger hides in streets at night  
With whited hair like almond spray  
    you'll drag yourself along each day  
And rest each stop like a tired old grasshopper  
    rests the previous hop

.....Cont.

Then sweet desire for life will fail  
and the final step and final rest, look hale  
And folks for you will mourn  
just as they have grieved for others yore  
Yet there will be no turning back  
for the precious silver chain has snapped  
The golden lamp of life it's beams have paled  
the pulley's rope has failed  
And the God-given water vibrant sent  
from the broken earthen pitcher's spent

Decay and rust will seize your frame  
as the Maker's spark returns to dust  
"For life is vain an idle dream  
and nothing lasts," so goes the preacher's theme  
After all is said and done  
there's really only one thing that finally matters son,  
Do you respect your Father dear  
and act what He says in commandments clear?  
There's no doubt He's seen whate'er we've been,  
including our every secret scheme  
Whether it was good and true  
or whether it enshrined a tainted evil residue.



# The Babes and the Prudent

His gracious deeds of love and compassion done  
With wondering awe, gazed the angel throng  
But the prying, curious crowds of Capernaum  
Saw not their faces, nor heard their song

Men's actions strange, indifferent; evokes  
The thought that time and eternity were themes  
Scarce worthy of the minds of better folk  
For priest and ruler, scribe and pharisee

Cavilled long on endless theory and tradition;  
Stubborn their grip on customs ceremonial, yet  
While the superficial vied for No. 1 position  
Mankind's Saviour, they did perchance forget

And yet there was a few, who suffered grace  
To touch and cleanse the heart, a lowly few,  
Unlearned? Yes, but with an insight rare, placed  
Value real, and gloried Him, as Friend, Messiah true

*"At that time Jesus answered and said,  
I thank thee, O Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
Because thou hast hid these things from the prudent  
And revealed them unto babes." Matt. 11:25*

O Father just,  
What you did for them, please do for us.

Editor's note: Here is an interesting earlier version of the first stanza:

His gracious deeds of love and compassion done  
Were regarded with wonder by the angel throng  
But the multitudes of Chorizin and Capernaum  
With indifference and hardness of heart looked on  
Their mindless actions showed that eternity was not  
A theme upon which they chose to reflect a lot.

# Unbelief

Many, darkness as a garment gather, they say  
"We want no special knowledge of thy way,  
O God, 'the way I choose let it be mine'  
We love the things that separate our souls from thine"

Why is it then that men will not believe and do  
When evidence sufficient God gives for them to view?  
Because they do not want be convinced, they shout  
"We want pegs on which to hang our doubts"

With spirit brave they sight "Proof, proof, give us that,  
Provide our unbelief, a testimony of insufficient facts  
Give much that pleases well our ideas and situation  
As harmonize you must, our will and disposition"

# Hope, Sweet Hope

My Jesus said he would go away  
And mansions prepare for us one day  
That where He is, we may also be  
In never fading light His face to see  
My heart leaps at the prospect sweet  
Heaven blessed abode, it's ours to keep!

I'm glad every moment that Jesus lives  
And to us His life of grace He gives.  
My weary soul says "Praise the Lord"  
There's a fullness in Him we can afford  
For why should we die for want of bread  
Or starve in a foreign land instead?



## Psalm No.1

1. Happy! Yes, well contented is the man  
Who shuns the guidance of a Godless plan  
Who refuses ways of wicked brothers  
And keeps his mouth from criticizing others
2. It delights him, the doing of his Master's letter  
And by each day's meditation seeks to know it better
3. Is he not that mighty tree  
Planted by still waters free  
The one that has much fruit come on  
Yet refuses death when drought prolongs  
Like the tree the good he does each day  
Lives on in trust and never goes away
4. Ungodly men just are not so  
Like chaff with every wind they blow
5. Their actions have a voice that speaks  
And in the final judgement keeps  
The door that's always stood ajar  
Firm fixed with bolt and bar
6. There the knowing Judge sees righteous all  
And with regret He views the sinners fall

# Yokes

Based on the E. G. White comments,  
SDA Bible Commentary on Matt. 11:28-30

Men frame yokes for their necks to wear  
Of a type that seem really pleasant and fair  
Yet the final outcome is nought but gall  
Which proves that it wasn't Christ's at all  
For His yoke is easy and His burden small

For instance,  
The yokes of fashion were never designed  
To make the foolish minds of men refined  
For the rules of the world in this respect  
Are rather vain and do not in character reflect  
The Maker's instructions which if made to bend  
Cause the neck to chafe at the journey's end

Remember,  
The yoke you place upon your frame  
Hoping vainly it fits, is not the same  
As the measure that the Saviour takes  
And never with false estimate makes  
A yoke of restraint and obedience true.  
It proves of benefit to me and you  
For you see it keeps us near His side  
While the heaviest lift He does provide

So with grace that yoke we take and giving  
Up the struggle stern, and earnestly living  
With a sense of our weakness great  
And while learning of meekness, we make  
That heavenly anointing life's great goal,  
And in doing, it never fails to rest the soul

*"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me;  
for I am meek and lowly in heart:  
and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*

# His Tearful Prayer

It is thy day O church, thou bride  
With whom thy Husband's law abides  
This day of trust must soon be past  
The dying sun is low and westering fast

Can it be that it will set and yet  
Thou wilt not know, did you forget  
The things that belong unto thy peace?

Are they now hidden from thine eyes?  
O that thy sightless blight might cease  
Before the sentence sure applies.



## My Prayer

O Lord, might this my constant motto be  
To ever let Yourself live out Your life in me  
To persevere in overcoming every fault so tiring  
The wisdom and the strength is found abiding  
Not within my baleful soul-sick members  
But with You who knows and who remembers  
All to well, my spirits frail undone condition  
And grace you give to me and all who with contrition  
Fall on bended knee and with glad humiliation  
Scoop deep the flowing springs of Your salvation

# Sun on the Face

When the sunshine of heaven fills the mind  
It puts upon a morbid face a smile, the kind  
That indicates a constant holy impulse grand  
Has formed to help and bless the other man

This Love is Godliness, when self is merged in Christ  
'Tis a principle that Satan hates and with the highest  
Cunning seen, denies that Jesus shows us how to live  
And how to daily die to self  
    and how with gratefulness to give  
An hour of service free to bless  
    the likes of you... And even me

# The Upward Look

We often fail by searching wide  
For that which close at hand abides

So tried and tempted one look up  
Look long and you will see  
The heavens are calm and steady be

But in gazing down earth reels and sways  
Nothing's sure but sin and rage  
So climber bold look up

See there that heavenly hand  
Reaching o'er the ramparts grand

He's sure to grasp in strong embrace  
The sinner's hand with love and grace  
Look up, dear one , look up with faith

# The Token Smile

I see a living carpet green  
    enshrine those stunning flowers  
A reminder, as I look at them  
    of happy Eden's bowers  
Without a doubt they are an expression of His love  
A foretaste of that fairer Eden land above

And does it bring a smile to lips Divine  
To see delight upon this face of mine?  
And is it but a token small, yet true  
Of what He will for us... Yet do?

## Wanting?

Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, He comes  
Gracious Mercy's last decisive offer to His guilty sons  
So watching we wait that final fixing moment  
Lest coming suddenly He finds us cold and dormant

Some like the political man nurture power and fame  
And fashion's child her ornaments she views again  
Unmindful the cackling crowd indulgence seeks  
Knowing not the Judge the sentence keeps

"Thou art weighed in the balances  
    and art wanting found."

What then?

Perilous is the waiting watch of those who weary grow  
And turning cling the fond taste  
    of the fatal fruit to know.

(From Daniel 5:27 Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.)

# Almost Home

We've almost come to that place called home  
Soon that Voice, sweeter than a well sung poem  
We'll hear, "Enter thou, my son, to my joy and pleasure"  
Blessed sacred benediction, timeless, without measure  
I want to hear it from immortal lips sincere  
I want to shout and praise Him on the throne  
And hear my voice re-echo through the courts & domes

God help us and fill us with Thy power and fullness  
And finally bring us to Your world of goodness

## A Final Explanation

There are homes for wandering pilgrims weary  
With robes for the righteous and crowns of glory  
There mysteries of grace will unfold like flowers  
Under the influence of heavenly showers

All that's perplexed with sorrow and pain  
Will then in God's providence be explained  
Where finite minds saw confusion and crying  
We'll see that **Love** ordered things most trying

As we realize the care of Him who would  
Make all things work together for good  
We shall rejoice with joy unspeakably glorious  
And shout with those ransomed souls victorious.

# Finished

Based on The Desire of Ages, p764

Our Father, thou loving fountain sweet of life  
    unborrowed and underived  
How sad that when by choice,  
    rejectors of Your truth the sowing, reaping  
Will find your Presence precious  
    becomes a bolt of flame and weeping  
Though when in time the controversy  
    was but young in issues understood  
And angels comprehended not sin's consequence  
    for years sustained  
That lingering evil seed of doubt,  
    its deadly fruit of sin and woe remained  
  
But not so when the awesome controversy  
    great shall ended be  
When redemption's plans completed,  
    and God's character reveals  
To all intelligence created, that perfect Law immutable,  
    a guarantee  
That sin and Satan cease with nature manifest,  
    and seals  
A final vindication of His love before a universe who thrill  
With shout of voice and heart within the cradle of His will  
  
Well might angels sing  
    as they looked upon the Saviour's cross  
For though they did not then perceive  
    the controversy entire  
Sin's end certain they understood,  
    man's future life secure from loss  
But Christ Himself  
    He understood the joyful implications higher  
And with faiths eye upward gazing,  
    Sweet Victory uttered "It is finished".

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